

Many years of strife and war in Afghanistan means that thousands of ex-combatants now need help to resume normal lives. To support these people the Afghan Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD), the ILO, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the Reintegration Support Project for Ex-combatants (RSPE).

The RSPE offers a comprehensive approach to help former fighters and their families find ways of supporting themselves. While services are provided directly to those in need, RSPE simultaneously works to create a labour market that supports their re-integration. This is in line with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).

Funded by the United Kingdom Government, the RSPE will assist ex-combatants and their families reintegrate into Afghan society by helping them find sustainable ways to make a living.

The Project will also strengthen the structures and resources of the MoLSAMD so that the Ministry can provide sustainable labour market services to targeted vulnerable groups.

To do this the RSPE will work through and build on the existing network of public Employment Services Centres (ESCs). These 10 centres (in Gardez, Ghazni, Herat, Jalalabad, Jowzjan, Kabul, Kandahar,

Kunduz, Mazar and Pul-i-Khumri) were set up under a MoLSAMD/ILO project that began in May 2004. Staffed by Ministry personnel, they help jobseekers find vocational training, paid work or start their own businesses.

The ESCs also help employers recruit qualified people. Training providers also use the ESCs to find suitable training programme participants, and afterwards refer their graduates back to the Centres to help them find work.

While the ESCs will continue to help all Afghans, specific attention will be given to ex-combatants and their families under the RSPE.

These people will first register at a Centre where they will receive vocational counseling to help them identify which training or job opportunities suit them best.

The RSPE will also provide training programmes specifically tailored to meet the needs of the most vulnerable former fighters. It is expected that the RSPE will foster strong links between the ESCs and others with an interest in the labour market, including private sector employers, vocational training providers, employer and worker organizations, UN agencies implementing large-scale projects, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups.

The RSPE will also work to establish operating systems and procedures at the MoLSAMD that will oversee the network of Employment Services Centres, including the development of a decent work and sustainable livelihoods strategy.